

8th December 2020

Changes to Academy Assessment/Reporting System

For this coming academic year, we have changed several elements of our assessment and reporting system. These changes have been made to make improvements in how assessment and reporting information can involve and inform everyone associated with the academy. These changes will also move our systems in line with the national context.

Key Stage 3 – Changing from number grades to reporting judgements

You may be aware that there is a national movement in education for Key Stage 3 students (year 7 and 8) to not be assessed against GCSE content and to not be given GCSE number grades to judge their academic understanding and progress. Instead we will be moving to judgements that highlight how well a student has understood the required knowledge and demonstrated the necessary skills studied within each subject topic. We firmly believe this is beneficial to students as it will focus both teaching and learning on a love of learning rather than teaching to the GCSE exam.

For each topic students study, teachers have developed a set of statements to summarise the knowledge and skills students should acquire during each topic/unit area. Students will be assessed against these criteria and be given one of the following judgements:

Emerging
Developing
Secure
Advancing
Exceptional

Emerging is the lowest judgement and exceptional the highest judgement. Due to a judgement being given per subject topic, it is possible a student could be 'developing' in one topic and be 'advancing in the next'. The judgements can change and improve/deteriorate each reporting cycle. Please also be aware that as these are an evaluation on how well students have mastered the content covered, the judgement given is likely to be relative to the teaching set they are in.

Please be aware that the only subject and year group that will not be following this system is year 9 Science. This is due to students needing three years to complete their GCSE in this subject. This is needed in order to ensure that the relevant amount of extensive content is fully covered by students in time for their year 11 GCSE exams. As a result, students will be given a GCSE number grade to assess their progress in combined or separate Science. If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact our team leader for Science – Mrs Hayward.

GCSE/A-Level Targets

You may be aware from feedback from your child that we have carried out a new system this year that gives students input into their GCSE and A-Level targets. We have given students some information on their expected achievement but we have then allowed them to decide which subjects they may have higher or lower targets in. These are then reviewed by senior staff to ensure that the overall targets would allow students to move to their desired next steps (A-Levels, universities etc). Again, we firmly believe this is an improvement due to it giving students an element of ownership over their targets and as a result their learning.

Changes to Attitude to Learning Judgements/Descriptors

We have carried out some work on reviewing our Attitude to Learning judgements (ATLs) to ensure they were fully integrated into our academy values. We carried out extensive reviews of this work with staff to ensure we were

doing this in a way that improved the descriptors for students and not just linking them to our values in a token manner.

The main change in our ATL system is to move from four judgements to five. It is still the case that the higher number the 'better' the ATL judgement. In the new system '5' will be the highest and '1' will be the lowest. The reason we have moved to five judgements is to highlight when students move to demonstrating certain behaviours and attitudes consistently (every day). Again, we firmly believe this ensures that students who really are being the 'best they can be' on a consistent basis are rightly highlighted. This means that value can be attached to judgements and will be something that students can progress in and feel truly proud of. The levels can be summarised below:

- 5 – Outstanding attitude to learning consistently
- 4 – Good attitude to learning with inconsistent very good/outstanding traits
- 3 – Satisfactory attitude to learning with inconsistent good traits
- 2 – Satisfactory attitude to learning generally but inconsistent in overall effort/attitude
- 1 – Poor attitude to learning

GCSE and A-Level Predicted Grades

We have decided to only enter end of course predicted grades for GCSE/A-Level students in each reporting cycle. Students 'current' grade can fluctuate heavily depending on their understanding of the current topics they are studying. By focusing on end of course achievement it allows staff to clearly identify which students require intervention and support to achieve and exceed their target grades.

Topic Lists

Parents/carers of GCSE/A-Level students will see on student reports that we are given them an indication of the topics they need to concentrate their revision/private study on for each reporting cycle. This will help students to populate revision timetables but also to ensure that their time is focused on the necessary topics and therefore used as effectively as possible. Once again this has been done to give some ownership to students in their learning.

Removal of Written Reports

Following consultation with a number of staff, students and parents - we received a large amount of feedback that stated that written reports were not utilised to help improve student achievement. As a result, we have decided to remove these from this academic year onwards. This is not a decision we have taken lightly, however we firmly believe that assessment and reporting should not just act as a summary of student achievement, instead it should have the primary purpose of being useful for students, parents and staff in driving student progress forward.

We have asked staff to utilise this time by developing assessment methodologies to accurately predict end of course grades and to indicate to students the topic areas that they need to focus their revision/intervention/private study on (as indicated above).

Students will be informed of all of these changes through an assembly they will receive from me this half term. Furthermore, please see our new 'Assessment and Reporting' section of our website for further information ((including a full overview of attitude to learning grades).

Thank you in advance for your support with these extensive changes. If you have any issues or questions then please do not hesitate to contact me at the academy. We look forward to using assessment and reporting information to work with parents in a much more purposeful and empowering way for students.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Vallance – Strategic Director of Student Experience

